

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 1757

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG IR
SUBJ: SENIOR NIOC DIRECTORS RESIGN IN PROTEST

REF: TEHRAN 1691

1. NIOC IS A BEEHIVE OF RUMOR AND ACTIVITY TODAY AS THE FOUR MOST SENIOR DIRECTORS, OF A TOTAL SEVEN, ARE CLEARING OUT THEIR DESKS AFTER HAVING RESIGNED FROM THEIR OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES--THOUGH NOT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. THE RESIGNATIONS ARE A PROTEST AGAINST THE APPOINTMENT JAN 15 OF TWO NEW DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTORS (REFTEL. THE FOUR DIRECTORS WHO ARE LEAVING ARE PARVIZ MINA, DIRECTOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; MOHAMMAD-ALI NABEGH, DIRECTOR FOR EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION; MAJID DIBA, DIRECTOR FOR PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS; AND ALI-ASHGAR RAFIEE, DIRECTOR FOR NON-BASIC OPERATIONS.

2. THE ABSENCE OF MINA AND NABEGH WILL BE SORELY FELT FOR THEY ARE BOTH EXTREMELY ABLE, WELL EDUCATED, AND EXPERIENCED; AND THEY HAVE PERFORMED WELL IN THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT AND DEMANDING JOBS IN NIOC BELOW THAT OF CHAIRMAN AND GENERAL MANAGING DIRECTOR. THE FOUR DIRECTORS ARE LEAVING TO PROTEST A. THE APPOINTMENT OF
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AND OUTSIDER (MEHRAN) AS DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR,
B. THE APPOINTMENT OF A FORMER COLLEAGUE (NAJMABADI) TO THE SENIOR POSITION OF DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR, AND
C. THE INSULT TO REZA FALLAH, THE LONG TIME DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR AND "MR OIL", OF HAVING BEEN KICKED OUT. THE EMB REPORTED (REFTE) THAT REZA FALLAH AND AGHAKHAN BAKHTIAR HAD BECOME ADVISORS TO

CHAIRMAN NASARY WITH NO REAL CHANGE IN RESPONSIBILITIES,
BUT WE HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT THE "APPOINTMENTS"
WERE A TRANSPARENT AND INEFFECTIVE FACE SAVING GESTURE
AND BOTH HAVE LOST THEIR OFFICES IN THE NIOC BUILDING.
FALLAH, IN ORDER TO ADVISE ANSARY, WILL PRESUMABLY
HAVE TO DO SO BY TELEX SINCE HE HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED
TO LONDON.

3. INSPIRED RUMOR OR PERHAPS ONLY WISHFUL THINKING
AT NIOC HAS IT THAT THE SHAH WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY
CONCERNED ABOUT THE VACUUM CREATED BY THE DEPARTURE
OF MINA, NABEGH, ET AL, THAT A WAY WILL BE FOUND TO
BRING THEM BACK. WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ENVISION
THEIR RETURN SO LONG AS ANSARY, MEHRAN AND NAJMABADI
HOLD THEIR POSITIONS. HOWEVER, IT IS CERTAINLY
REASONABLE TO ASSUME THE SHAH WILL BE DISPLEASED
OVER THE TURMOIL AT NIOC.
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